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TAGS: [PTER KISL MO](#)
SUBJECT: MOROCCO: FRIDAY SERMON USES ISLAM TO BLAST
TERRORISM

Sensitive but Unclassified. Please Protect Accordingly.

¶1. (SBU) Summary: The March 16 Friday sermon, heard at mosques throughout Morocco (and broadcast nationally), concentrated scathing criticism on the phenomenon of terrorism in general and suicide bombing in particular, obviously prompted by the (abortive) March 11 terrorist incident in Casablanca. The message, prepared by the GOM's Ministry of Islamic Affairs, appeared to be well received by an overflowing crowd of worshippers observed at the Tour Hassan mosque in central Rabat. Worshippers were heard to call the terrorists "deviants" and "unbelievers." This parallels increasing condemnation of terrorism in the media and among political parties, including the Islamist PJD (septel). End summary.

¶2. (SBU) The Friday sermon read by Imams at mosques across Morocco on March 16 asserted that moderation and non-violence were core elements of the Islamic religion, as conveyed by God through his messengers. Islam will continue to be a "comprehensive and eternal system of life," the sermon predicted, in spite of attempts to pervert it by extremists on the one hand and secularists on the other. The sermon underscored the irony of some terrorists' conformity to Islamic dress codes and outward expressions of piety even as they carried out acts "utterly remote from the essence of true Islam." All believers of Islam must denounce such barbarian acts and preach within their families the values of tolerance and coexistence, the sermon urged.

¶3. (SBU) The sermon warned Muslims that suicidal terrorism is a double crime against divine law -- combining the sin of suicide with the sin of homicide. Perpetrators of such acts will be held to account on judgment day, the sermon warned. "The Prophet Muhammad was physically attacked, but never reacted violently toward his enemies. He instead preached the word of God and forgave his enemies. We must follow the same example if we are to be rewarded in heaven."

¶4. (SBU) Following the sermon and subsequent prayers, the overflowing crowd of worshippers at the Tour Hassan mosque in central Rabat appeared to be in strong agreement with the Imam's message, according to Embassy FSN who attended. Fellow worshippers were heard to express strong disdain for the terrorists involved in the March 11 incident in Casablanca, whom some characterized as "deviants" and "disbelievers".

¶5. (SBU) The Friday sermon is prepared by scholars and vetted by officials at the Ministry of Islamic Affairs in Rabat and distributed nationally to Imams through regional councils of Ulema (Islamic scholars). The sermon is also broadcast nationwide on state TV and radio. Friday sermons have long been prepared and distributed by the Ministry, but were often disregarded by local Imams prior to the Casablanca bombings of May 2003, which killed 45 and injured hundreds. Since

then, the Ministry has been rigidly enforcing the use of the official weekly sermon in mosques, with broad success, at least in major population centers.

Visit Embassy Rabat's Classified Website;
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/nea/rabat>

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